

“VELEHRAD IS OUR PROGRAMME.”  
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CYRILLO-METHODIC IDEA  
AND THE VELEHRAD MOVEMENT FOR 19<sup>TH</sup>  
AND 20<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY MORAVIAN CATHOLICISM

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In the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the adoration of the Saints, Cyril and Methodius, grew among Slavic peoples. More and more, it became linked up with national demands and finally lead to the so-called Cyrillo-Methodic idea which aimed at a rapprochment between the Catholic and Orthodox denominations. Velehrad, where St. Methodius is said to be buried, evolved into a Moravian centre of this idea as well as Czech catholicism in general. Beginning with the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a circle around Antonín Cyril Stojan, who later became archbishop of Olomouc, sought to counteract endeavours to politically exploit Velehrad and the Cyrillo-Methodic idea, and instead to devote greater attention to religious questions such as the relationship with the Orthodox world. Starting in 1907, several Union Congresses took place which were devoted tu just this goal. It is important to note that the Catholic reform movement “Jednota”, which had been revived after the first World War, was a con-

sequence of the Velehrad movement to a certain extent, and that some of the founders of the Czechoslovak Church had been part of it as well. After 1948, the communists sought to make the Cyrillo-Methodic idea a symbol of close relations with the Soviet Union. With this in mind, they also exploited a widespread interest in pilgrimages to Velehrad. Whereas the 1000th anniversary of the death of St. Methodius in 1985, due to many restrictions by the communist rulers, had of necessity to be observed in a rather restrained fashion, the visit in April 1990 by Pope John Paul II became a celebrated event and a symbol of changed political circumstances.